



# Using Motivational Interviewing to Improve Communications with Patients, Colleagues and Others

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## Theories

### Student Development Theory

Three potential positive outcomes contained within the peer tutoring program that may assist the student in academic difficulty during the anxiety-provoking experience of medical school training:

- The help student received in attempting to improve the level of performance in a course
- Regular peer tutoring may assist the student in learning how to organize and maintain a systematic study schedule
- Students can develop more efficient study skills

### Motivational Interviewing (MI) Theory

- “A client-centered directive model for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence.” (Miller & Rollnick, 2009).
- Honors and respects individual’s autonomy
- Explores
  - What is working/not working
  - Motivation for change
  - Options
  - Confidence/hope in ability to change
  - Intention
- Self-perception theory –as I hear myself talk, I learn what I believe.

## When is MI useful?

While MI has a number of uses, it can help individuals and teams:

- Reduce conflict/disagreement in a team
- Understand another’s perspective
- Help someone take responsibility for their actions
- Empower a person by developing confidence in their abilities and experience
- Use a person’s previous experience to determine a course of action
- Develop and accountability plan

## OARS

### COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH OARS

Summarised From *How To Do Motivational Interviewing* By Bill Matulich

#### OPEN QUESTIONS

Questions that invite people to say more and open up a conversation. For example, *tell me about the movie you watched yesterday?* They are good for getting more information out of people and unlike closed questions which get a fixed or specific answer, they can help you learn more from a person.

#### AFFIRMATIONS

Statements that recognise a person’s achievements and positive attributes. They are encouraging in nature and during a conversation can make people more willing to talk. For example, *I like the fact that you take time every month to watch a movie. I see it as a good way to relax and it’s good for your well-being.*

#### REFLECTIONS

These are statements made back to the person you are listening to. They mirror or rephrase what you heard the person say. These statements show you are listening and help clarify your understanding of what the person said. For example, *so you watched the movie at 8pm, is that correct?*

#### SUMMARIES

Summaries are longer forms of reflections. It is summarising what you heard a person say after they’ve spoken for a long time. For example, *you watched the movie yesterday at 8pm. It was an action movie and you didn’t like it very much. Just like a reflection, it demonstrates listening and checks understanding.*

**IMPLICATIONS:** The OARS set of skills will allow you to communicate effectively with almost anyone if you use them well. Open questions give you the ability to ask people questions that prompt them to reveal more information, affirmations help you to show a person recognition, while reflections and summaries allow you to show you are listening and demonstrate empathy. While these skills seem simple, they are very powerful and using them will make you a better communicator.

## REFERENCES

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- MINT: <http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/Swanbrow>
- Becker, Martin A., and David J. Drum. "Essential Counseling Knowledge and Skills to Prepare Student Affairs Staff to Promote Emotional Wellbeing and to Intervene With Students in Distress." *Journal of College and Character* 16.4 (2015): 201-208.

## Examples

**Open-Ended Questions** – encourages the other person to do most of the talking

- Often start with words like “how” or “what” or “tell me about” or “describe.”
- What are you enjoying about medical school? Clerkships?
- Tell me about a challenge you have faced
- How would you like things to be different?
- What have you tried before to make a change?

**Affirmations** – supports and promotes self-efficacy

- I appreciate how hard it must have been for you to come here. You took a big step
- I’ve enjoyed talking with you today, and getting to know you a bit.
- I appreciate your honesty.
- You handled yourself really well in that situation.
- That’s a good suggestion.
- You are very courageous to be so revealing about this.
- You’ve accomplished a lot in a short time

**Reflective Listening** – demonstrates that you have accurately heard and understood the other person

- It sounds like you...
- You’re wondering if...
- So you feel...
- Please say more...
- Reflections are statements ending with downward inflection, as opposed to questions, which tends to work better because some find it helpful to have some words to start a response.

**Summarize** – allows you to be strategic in what to include to reinforce talk that is in the direction of change

- So, let me see if I got this right...
- So you’ve been saying....is that correct?
- Let me see if I understand so far...
- Here’s what I’ve heard. Tell me if I’ve missed anything.
- Let me make sure I understand exactly what you’ve been trying to tell me...
- What you said is important. I value what you say. Here are some salient points.
- We covered that well. Let’s talk about....